The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers / L'Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

CASLT/ACPLS

PRESS RELEASE

Teacher Associations Call for Action on FSL Teaching and Learning Conditions

OTTAWA, December 7, 2006 – Key strategies to help address pressing issues faced by French as a Second Language (FSL) educators were on the agenda at the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers' (CASLT) annual Networking Day, held in Halifax December 1st.

The networking session was attended by representatives from provincial and territorial departments of education, teacher federations and language teacher associations, as well as key FSL stakeholders nationwide. Also on hand were observers from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The session focused on the recently released report *Teaching French as a Second Language in Canada: Teachers' Perspectives*. The report summarizes the findings of a national survey of over 1,305 FSL teachers from all provinces and territories, designed to collect their perceptions and opinions of their working and learning conditions. The study—the first of its kind—was funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and conducted jointly by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT).

Among the most pressing issues noted were limited access to adequate French teaching resources and quality professional development opportunities, and the need to improve public opinion and community support of FSL programs.

During the networking session, participants discussed the findings of the report, suggested key areas of action for recommendations and future activities, and developed an action plan. Communications support materials will allow volunteers to disseminate the findings and increase awareness of FSL education issues in Canada.

Dr. Miles Turnbull, CASLT President, stated that the results of the report clearly showcase a need for action. For example, survey respondents were quite dissatisfied with the resources available to them. Fewer than 50% of respondents considered commercial materials to be adequate, and 80% rated materials presenting Francophone culture as being of poor quality.

Moreover, one of the greatest challenges facing FSL teachers is meeting expectations in terms of level of proficiency in French, educational approach, and familiarity with experiential, interactive second language teaching methodologies. Teachers expressed a need for more professional development activities that target such areas as upgrading French language skills and providing information on newer methodologies.

Participants will meet with interested stakeholders throughout the early part of 2007 to explore various ways to improve FSL education in Canada.

The report is available for consultation on the CASLT Web site (www.caslt.org), on the CTF Web site (http://www.ctf-fce.ca) and on the CAIT Web site (http://www.acpi-cait.ca).

Established in 1970, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) increases awareness, appreciation and understanding of the importance of second language learning and teaching throughout Canada and promotes the advancement of professional excellence among language educators.

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